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Charm Called Ike's 'Strategy'

By James F. King

LONDON, Feb. 16 (AP)—Britain's top strategist of World War II says Dwight D. Eisenhower's strong point as a commander was his charm rather than military ability.

Field Marshal Alan F. Brooke, now Viscount Alanbrooke, wartime chief of the British General Staff (1941-46), made his observation in a war diary forming the basis of a new book to be published Monday, "The Turn of the Tide."

Alanbrooke did not have a very high opinion of most U. S. military leaders as strategists, including Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff. But he praised Gen. Douglas MacArthur as "the greatest general of the last war" and spoke well of Gen. Walter Bedell Smith.

Sir Arthur Bryant, British historian who wrote the book, credits Alanbrooke with being the mastermind of the grand strategy that brought the Allies victory.

'Learned a Lot'

Alanbrooke, in a footnote to his diary referring to Mr. Eisenhower, said:

"He learned a lot during the war, but tactics, strategy and command were never his strong points.

"... Where he shone was his ability to handle Allied forces, to treat them all with strict impartiality, and to get the very best out of an inter-allied force.

"In all the early times he was uncommonly well served by his chief of staff, Bedell Smith, who had far more flair for military matters than his master."

Alanbrooke, who had hoped to lead the Allied invasion forces into France—an assignment that went to Gen. Eisenhower—went on to comment:

"... Ike was blessed with a wonderful charm that carried him far; perhaps his great asset was a greater share of luck than most of us receive in life."

"However, if Ike had rather more than his share of luck we, as Allies, were certainly extremely fortunate to have such an exceptionally charming individual. As Supreme Commander what he may have lacked in military ability he greatly made up for by the charm of his personality."

Alanbrooke, an impetuous Irishman, devotes most of his diaries to details of rows with Winston Churchill, though he pays tribute to the wartime Prime Minister as the man who "saved the world from Nazi domination."

At Odds With Marshall

Alanbrooke went to all the major wartime conferences with Churchill after the United States entry into the war.

The British field marshal was repeatedly at odds with Gen. Marshall. He said though his

American counterpart was a great organizer "it is quite impossible to argue with him as he does not begin to understand a strategic problem."

Alanbrooke said Marshall once pressed for a cross-channel strike as early as 1942. Alanbrooke said this would have led to disaster.

The British Chief of Staff told, too, of repeated clashes with the late Adm. Ernest King, whom he accused of looking only to the Pacific.